The Victorian Alliance

Annual House Tour

Sunday, October 20, 1996 1:00 - 5:00 pm

Golden Gate Park Panhandle

An opportunity to experience six lovely homes in the Golden Gate Park Panhandle area. Refreshments will be served at the grand McLaren Lodge, a historic landmark, at the entrance to Golden Gate Park. Register there for door prizes on the day of the event and visit the Alliance Boutique and information booth. Learn the history of this neighborhood and discover some of its architectural treasures.

This year the buildings are spread over eight flat blocks, and comfortable shoes are suggested. A shuttle bus will be provided for those who need the assistance. Tickets are $15 in advance and $20 at the door, with discounts for seniors and students. Checks for advance orders must be received by September 20, 1996 at:

The Victorian Alliance
1076 Dolores Street
San Francisco, CA 94110

On the day of the event, tickets may be purchased at the first house, 1212 Fell St., between Divisidero and Broderick Streets. For additional information, please call Jim at (415) 621-2301 or Helen at (415) 346-3899.

HLJ 7/28/96

The Victorian Alliance of San Francisco

proudly presents its annual

House Tour

Sunday, October 20th, 1996
1-5 p.m.

Tour begins at 400 Clayton Street

$15.00 in advance - before September 20th
$20.00 at the door

Please bring this ticket to exchange for a program at the beginning of the tour. The program will be your admission into the houses.

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1996 House Tour

Golden Gate Park Panhandle

Sunday, October 20th, 1996

1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The
Victorian Alliance of
San Francisco

THE PANHANDLE NEIGHBORHOOD

Welcome to the Victorian Alliance's tour of the Panhandle Neighborhood!

Named for its shape, the Panhandle has always been part of Golden Gate Park. It came from the City's claim to lands of the Mexican town which became San Francisco. Congress recognized the claim in 1866, and the City settled with squatters in 1868.

The committee arranging the settlement consisted of Mssrs. Ashbury, Shrader, Cole and Clayton. They set criteria for the park site: 1000 acres as the largest likely to be cultivated by the City, an ocean boundary for "every element of natural beauty," not far from the developed area, with minimum width of half a mile and a path for cross traffic (Stanyan). They established park boundaries to include a "wide avenue . . . connecting . . . with the general street system, furnish[ing] a convenient entrance, capable of the highest order of ornamentation and cultivation," in short, the Panhandle.

Work on the Park began with leveling this "Avenue." The cuts and filling listed in Municipal Reports of 1871 indicate a valley from Baker to Lyon, a gradual hill almost to Clayton, then a sharp drop. A meandering, 70-foot-wide road was constructed through the leveled Avenue and into the wider Park. By mid-1872, 150 vehicles a day were using it. A museum of the world's trees was planted, and in 1880 the Panhandle was fenced. An 1896 newspaper noted "beautiful pathways" along Oak and Fell "among flowering and sweet-smelling shrubs."

Still the surrounding area was virtually empty. The earliest buildings were the Phelps House of about 1854, now at 1107 Oak Street, and the earlier, infamous Sans Souci Roadhouse near Divisadero and Fulton. Development worked irregularly west from the center of town, reaching the Panhandle around 1900.

-- Please NO SMOKING or TAKING of PICTURES in the houses--

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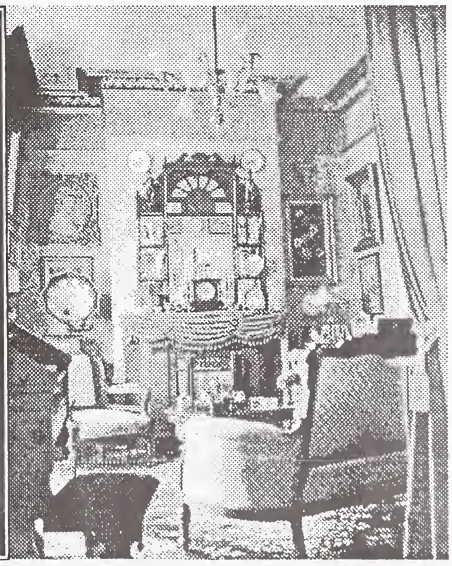

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Typically for the 19th century, the arrival of public transportation in 1883 -- a cable car line along Haight Street -- finally triggered construction of housing in the neighborhood. In 1886 another came, along Hayes. Descendants of these lines still carry passengers. A line now abandoned ran out Oak to Stanyan and back along Page. Its car barn was a broad brick affair on the lot at Oak and Broderick.

The area acquired amusements. Concessions grew up along Stanyan. There was a bicycle track at Fell and Baker where the yellow brick Southern Pacific Hospital stands, now Mercy Terrace. A baseball/football field operated at Stanyan and Waller 1887-1897. In 1895 "The Chutes" came to Haight between Clayton and Cole, a splash-down with merry-go-round, shooting gallery, and theater. There were several hotels on Stanyan including the Bon Air (now apartments) at Oak.

About 1898 there was an effort to extend the Panhandle all the way to Van Ness Avenue. It would have required demolition of the beautiful Sacred Heart Church at Fell and Fillmore, and of the then-new firehouse on Oak, inspired by a fatal fire at Page and Lyon in 1892. Voters defeated it.

Later non-residential uses include St. Ignatius/University of San Francisco, which relocated to Fulton and Shrader after the 1906 fire. Howard Presbyterian Church (now Mt. Zion Baptist) was designed at Oak and Baker by Percy and Hamilton in 1896, Lowell High School, now John Adams

Adult School, stood near one side of the Panhandle at Hayes and Ashbury from 1912, and Polytechnic High stood near the other side on Waller west of Stanyan. St. Mary's Hospital, in one guise or another, has been near Hayes and Stanyan since 1909. And of course the Park itself at this end has Children's Playground, tennis courts, bowling lawns, Kezar Stadium, and a carefully preserved pre-park woodland of California live oaks.

Styles of the residences around the Panhandle show their ages. Many are Queen Anne of the 1890s, with complicated three-dimensional shapes, several types of siding, heavy and imaginative ornament, triangular roof ends, and sometimes towers. Others are Colonial or Classical Revival of the 1900s, with simple shapes, ornament closer to classical prototypes and less of it, flat or hipped roofs, smooth or narrow clapboard siding. Some combine Queen Anne with Classical-Colonial Revival. Most of the apartment buildings came along in the 1910s and 1920s, reflecting a need for more dense housing.

The development of the Sunset district signaled a decline in the neighborhood, more renters and absentee owners, less maintenance. The trend worsened during the Depression of the 1930s, and some maintenance "modernized" the buildings. In the 1940s houses and flats were subdivided to help accommodate the huge influx of workers for World War II industries. Around 1960, people displaced by Western Addition Redevelopment resettled here.

In 1964 Caltrans proposed a freeway through the Panhandle and Golden Gate Park. A mass of citizens rose up in anger, created the Great Freeway Revolt, forced Caltrans to retreat, and set in motion such long-standing political forces as San Francisco Tomorrow and Supervisor Sue Bierman.

A different kind of fame happened in 1967, the Summer of Love. Economic decline had created low rents, which attracted "beatniks" from North Beach, and students and dropouts from all over. Asian philosophies, opposition to the Vietnam War, artistic creation, LSD, and rock music merged into the "hippies'" dream of a peaceful, loving world. The center was Haight Street, but the Panhandle saw many of the Summer's activities. It was an exciting time.

Suddenly the atmosphere turned ugly. The drug scene became heavy, crime increased dramatically, businesses fenced themselves in or closed, residents moved away from unpleasant sights and smells. In 1971 a mayor's committee recommended that the whole Haight district be torn down and a new start made.

The residents fought back, winning battles for residential zoning in 1972 and against University of California expansion in 1975. Gradually the neighborhood has worked its way back to prosperity. And part of the comeback has been the fixing up of historic houses, such as you will see today.

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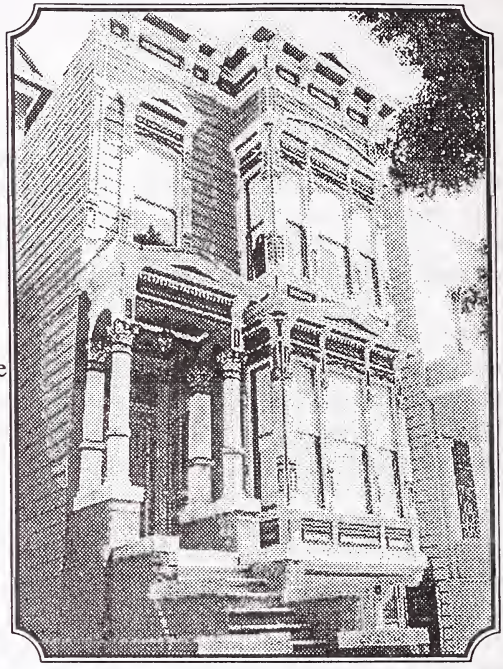
1212 FELL STREET

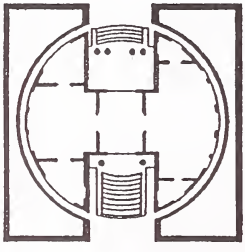


The Samuel and Mary C. McDonnell House, our only example of the Stick style, is the oldest building on the tour, and also the closest to downtown. The two facts are related, because development worked its way gradually from downtown to the beach.

This is the sister house of 1210 Fell. Both are identified as Stick style by the rectangular bay window and the emphasis on verticality. It's an early example because of the Corinthian columns and bracketed cornice just like the 1870s Italianates. The bay shape, incised verticals and corner boards mark the new style.

The two houses were built in the spring of 1880 by David F. McGraw, an owner-builder-contractor who was active to about 1895. His projects include a cluster of three two-story houses designed by Pissis & Moore at Golden Gate and Scott Streets, a cluster of four in 1890 at 2773-2787 Clay Street, a pair in 1884 at 2838-2844 Bush, 2860 Pine in 1887, and two buildings at Parker and Geary. Only three families have lived here. The first owner was Samuel A. McDonnell, born in 1843 of Irish parents in New York. His 12 years younger wife, Mary C. gave birth in this house to their two children: Herbert L. in 1881 and Ada B. in 1886. The 1900 census also indicates a live-in Irish servant Agnes Haggarty, then 26.

Samuel McDonnell operated a prosperous pharmacy on Market Street. After being burned out in 1906, he relocated on Fillmore Street, then back downtown on Powell. Later he passed the business on to his son, also a pharmacist, and his wife Mary Jo. The next generation's Herbert McDonnell later sold the pharmacy; he died in 1931. Around that time no one named McDonnell lived at 1212 Fell, but in the 1940s and 1960s the two Herberts' widows, Mary Jo and Mary Leona, both lived in



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the house. In 1961 it was sold to Carroll Heath and his partner Louis Pedro. They in turn sold it to the present owners In November 1995.

Because the McDonnell House was occupied by the same owner-family for most of its first 80 years, it escaped the deterioration and remodeling suffered by many fine houses in this area during and after World War II. Original features include unpainted Lincrusta wainscotting in the halls, Gibson Girl brackets in the parlors, pocket doors, door hardware, and servants' call box in working condition. The porch steps and vestibule are terrazzo, installed about 1916. The most recent painting was in 1991.

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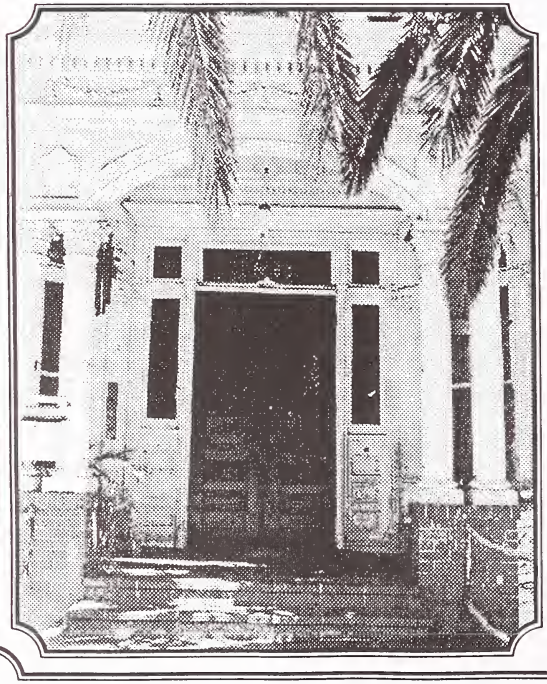
1550 FELL STREET

The Isadore Zellerbach House's details are barely visible behind the trees. Its shingled turret, hipped (four-slope) roof and triangular gable identify the style as Queen Anne. So do the "jewel"-studded art glass panels beside the door, the impressive mahogany hall, and the stair landing's stained glass.

The house was designed in 1893 by Absalom J. Barnett, and built by Jonathan Ogle for $10,000. Son of a St. Louis architect, Barnett settled in San Francisco in 1883 and was known primarily for rather elaborate, trendy residences. He designed several in the Historic Districts of Liberty Hill (15-17, 44-46, and 50 Liberty Street) and Alamo Square (809-11 Pierce, 1102-04 and 1100-12 Fulton).

The original owner was Isadore Zellerbach, a partner with his brother Jacob and their father Anthony in the paper firm of Zellerbach and Sons. Anthony came to California in 1856 and kept a store in the gold country. He moved to San Francisco in 1868 and began to sell paper. Starting very modestly, the business grew into paper production and was valued at $20,000 in 1887. The following year 22-year-old Isadore became a partner, and in 1907 president. A "business dynamo," he really developed the company. He merged it with Crown Willamette Paper, and it became the world's second largest pulp and paper concern, Crown Zellerbach.

In 1893 Isadore, his wife Jeannette and their infant son moved to 1650 Fell, along with Isadore's parents and his six siblings. Shortly after the turn of the century, reportedly at the urging of his wife, Isadore moved his wife and children first to 1730 Fell, then to California west of Van Ness. Their sons were to attain fame, James as Ambassador to Italy under President Eisenhower, and Harold as a generous donor to and trustee of the S.F. Opera and Symphony.



After the 1906 earthquake the family returned to 1550 Fell, everyone slept across the street in the park until the fires and aftershocks subsided. Because no one could cook until chimneys were inspected and repaired, the Zellerbachs bought their bread from the Hebrew Orphan Asylum at Divisadero and Hayes. Soon Isadore's family moved to 1812 Broadway. His widowed mother eventually moved from Fell to the Palace Hotel, and in 1915 the house was sold.

The next occupants were the large family of W.S. Wallace, treasurer-manager of Neal Tone, a vitamins manufacturer. In 1932 the Wallaces, who come from Utah and were probably Mormons, deeded the house to the Mormon Church.

In 1941 the Russian Orthodox Church bought the property for the Convent of Our Lady of Vladimir. The dining room and parlors were the chapel, the nuns, who came from Russia via China, resided on the top floors. The basement was inhabited by other

emigres, usually poor, aged or disabled. "The House of Fell Street," a short story, tells how one of them particularly enjoyed the thrice-daily "heavenly music" of the nuns singing in the chapel above. The nuns cared for elderly and needy Russians here until the early 1990s.

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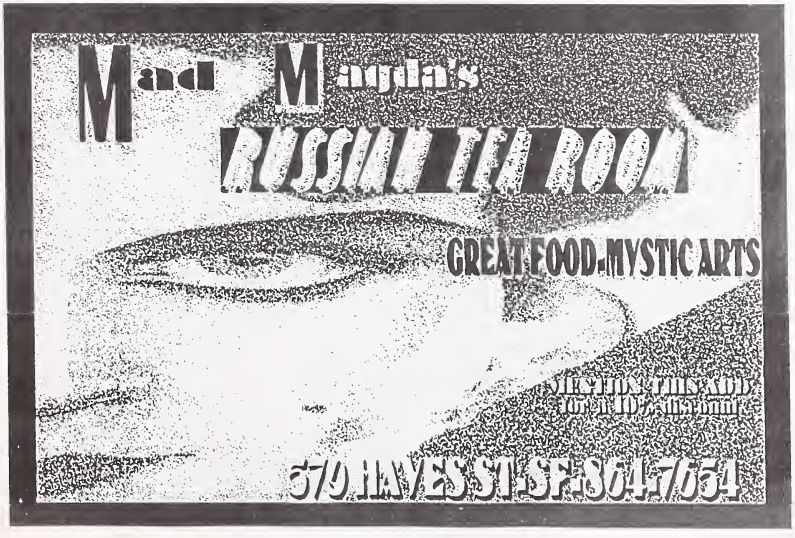
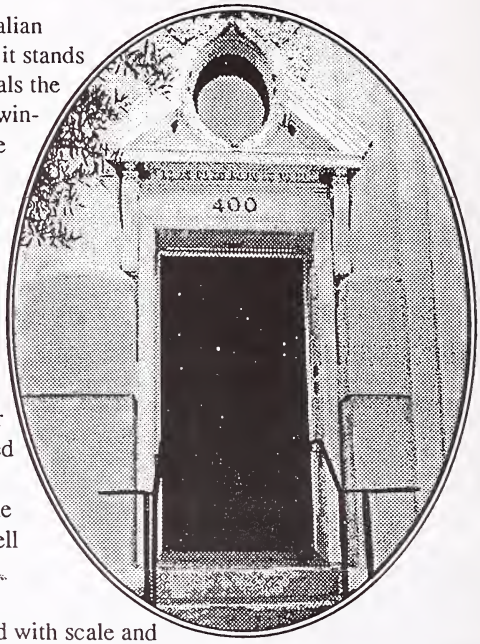


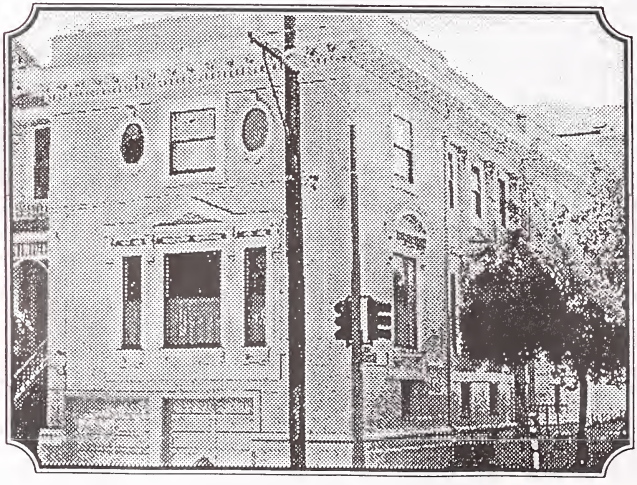
400 CLAYTON STREET

The Franzell-McFarland house is a take-off on an Italian Renaissance palazzo, but with a difference. Like them it stands right up to the sidewalk, is mostly symmetrical, conceals the roof with a heavy cornice, and has graduated sizes of windows from floor to floor, with arched pediments on the main floor. But unlike them, its center section is recessed, the walls are paneled, and decorative elements are way out of scale with each other. On purpose.



Professor Richard Longstreth devoted a full page of his book, *On the Edge of the World, four architects in San Francisco at the turn of the century*, to this house. He noted the "columns squeezed between other elements." He found the door "in a narrow slot dropped through the base like a utilitarian necessity." And this "agitated" center is held in by contrastingly simple side sections of bold scale. He praised the ensemble as "well suited to its compact site in a dense urban landscape."

The house's architect, Ernest Coxhead, often played with scale and used classical elements purely as decoration, for instance on the Home Telephone Building at 333 Grant Avenue. Inveterate tourgoers will remember his wonderful shingled church, Holy Innocents on Fair Oaks, which the Victorian Alliance showed a few years ago. One of California's half dozen great architects around 1900, the English born and trained Coxhead also designed the brick and stone Smith house at Jackson and Pierce, and two of the shingled houses on Pacific at the Presidio Wall.



This house was built in 1895 for Ellen Franzell and her daughter Elta McFarland. The daughter's husband, Alonzo McFarland (1862-1944), was secretary of the Pacific Fire Alarm Company. They were married in 1882 and had two sons, Elton and Alonzo, born in 1886 and 1887. The family lived in the house until the 1906 earthquake, and then they moved to a grander address on Broadway. In December 1907 Alonzo was named to and made foreman of the city's grand jury shortly after political boss Abe

Ruef had been convicted of bribery. There were still more of the graft trials to go, but civic righteousness was wearing thin by the time McFarland's grand jury took office. Alonzo was later active in the Commonwealth Club. The McFarlands kept 400 Clayton as income property for several years. The 1910 census showed it as three units.

In 1911 the Franzell-McFarland house was sold to Maria Alvina Fehleisen, and her family lived in it until 1936. Her husband Frederick was a physician with an office on Polk Street. The buyers in 1936 were Wyatt R. Brown, a manufacturers' agent, and his wife Josephine D. Brown. They lived here until selling the house in 1969, and the present owners bought it in 1988.

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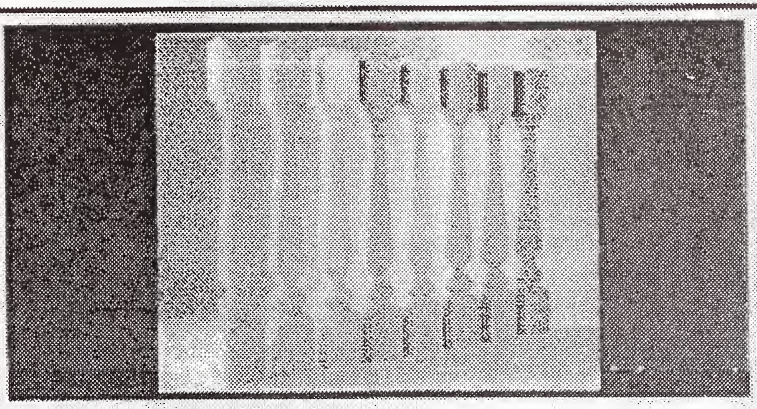

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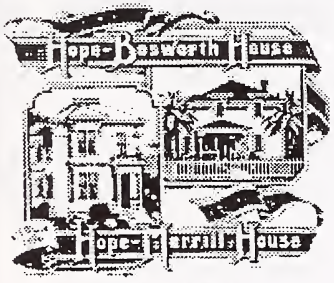

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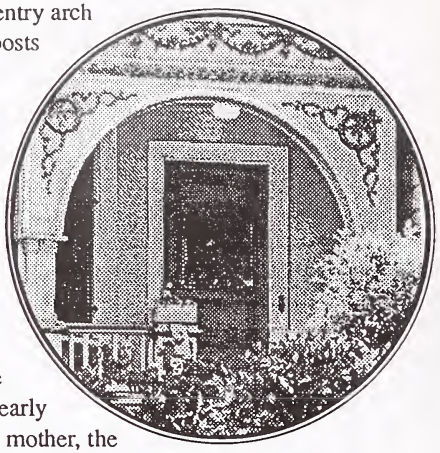
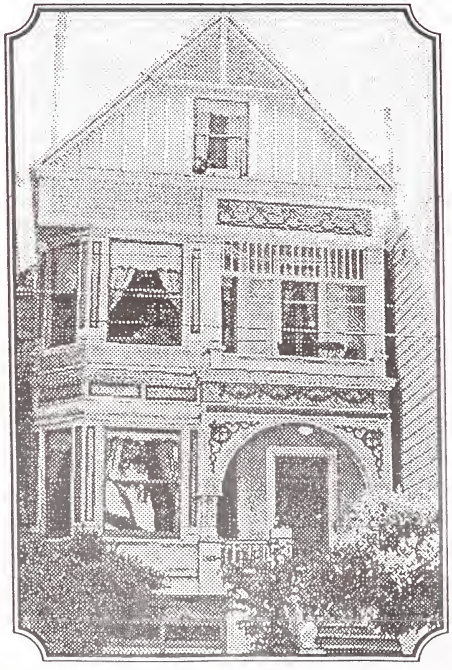
1915 OAK STREET

The Georgiana Hawkins House displays many markers of the Queen Anne style: first and foremost in the triangular top and the way its left corner cantilevers out over the angled side of the bay window. Then there are the garland decorations, the big entry arch and the non-classical columns holding it up. The newel posts and garage door are modern.



The house was built in 1894 by Philip Haver, a little-known contractor-builder who was active 1892 to 1900. A couple of years he called himself an architect, but most of his houses were probably standard builder's floor plan and structure, constructed on speculation with facades designed to attract customers.

The original inhabitants of this house were a widow, Georgiana Hawkins, and her four teenaged children. The widow was an adjuster at the United States Mint. In the early 1900s the four children still lived in the house with their mother, the elder son then a chemist, the younger son a mining prospector, and the two daughters teachers in the public school system. The youngest, Georgia, eventually became the vice principal of Galileo High School. Later she bought out her siblings and lived in the house until her death around 1964.



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The house was then held for speculation and inhabited by The Church of the Good Earth Commune. A mural in the dining room by "Jimmy the Painter" attests to the spirit of those times, depicting a psychedelic nativity with some satanic images. The mural is currently covered by satin panels, but photos of it are on view in the dining room. In the 1970s the commune was infiltrated by the White Panthers, who took it over. The house was sold cheaply in 1977 partly in payment for a favor. The current owner bought the house as a "fixer upper" in 1981.

The exterior retains most of the original decorations. A stairwell skylight was added on the third floor in the 1920s. The addition of a garage in the 1930s necessitated the removal of the center posts of the house, causing a bit of sagging, which was not rectified until the 1970s. The previous owner rebuilt the back porch area. This addition has been turned into a sun porch/eating area.

The interior of the house has been "interpretively restored," retaining most of the original details but enhancing some. The front hallway and living room exhibit some beautiful stencil work by the late artist Larry Boyce, who lived with the owners while decorating the front lobby of Old First Presbyterian Church at Van Ness and Sacramento. The owner collects stained glass, although none of the pieces are original to the house. One exceptional window, in the upstairs library, came from Old St. Matthews Church in San Mateo. New items include some marquetry floors and the study adjoining the library.

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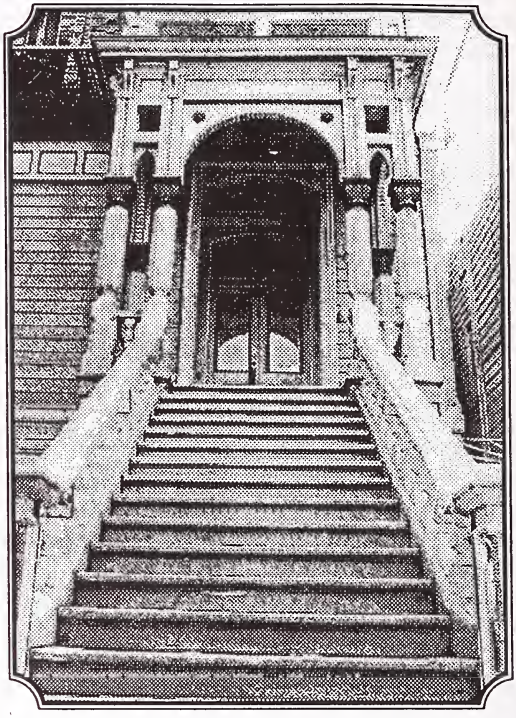

The Edward and Matilda Keil House was originally a large two-story home with stores below on Shrader, since converted to office and garage. The many-faceted tower, triangular roof ends, two kinds of siding and non-classical columns put it in the Queen Anne style category. But the rectangular bay and its window divisions, the long porch brackets, and vertical grooves at the windows remain from 1880s Stick style. Possibly unique are the gear-like arch edges.

The building was constructed in 1890 for $8300 by J.F. O'Brien to designs of Adolf C. Lutgens. The price suggests an upper middle class residence. Many of Lutgen's projects carried more modest prices. He built over three dozen houses in the Western Addition, Haight Ashbury, Mission and other neighborhoods between 1884 and 1898. His major projects included 140 Geary Street in 1908 and the 1906 Sonoma City Hall.

This house was built for Edward and Matilda Keil. Directories called him a "capitalist," usually meaning real estate and its finance. He died in 1892, and Matilda lived on here. The original commercial tenant was a grocery store.

George and Marie Katz bought the house in 1897. George, his father and brothers were wholesale and retail butchers in the California Market, a farmers' market-like collection of independent food retailers occupying the full square block where the Bank of America pyramid now stands. George and Marie lived here with their son, born in 1899, and a servant. After the 1906 earthquake, the Katzes moved to Ross in Marin County, continuing the family meat business in the city. In 1909 they turned the building into two flats and built the china cabinets, retaining the original combination gas and electric light fixtures and the stores on Shrader.

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In 1910 the upper flat was occupied by Godfrey Muller, a Swiss bartender, his American wife Dora, and her widowed daughter Mary Squire, a stenographer. George Katz's brother Gustav and his wife Lillian moved into this flat the next year. The downstairs the tenant 1911-1913 was William Hofmann, a musician.

About 1920 the house was purchased by Herman Wachter, a Hungarian house painter, and his Russian Jewish wife Rosa, immigrants of 1904. They lived in the upper flat with their five children. The lower flat was occupied by a Norwegian, Harry Rayne, with his daughter and son-in-law. Rayne operated a tailor shop downstairs on Shrader and kept it several years after moving out of the flat.

In 1923 Julius and Henry Hons and Henry's wife Elvina bought the building and probably occupied both flats. In 1924 Henry worked as an electrician out of one of the stores. Julius ran an electric shop in Noe Valley, owned several other properties in the city, and converted the upper flat into apartments. He was remembered as a genial craftsman who always wore a beanie to hide his bald spot. The Honses occupied the building for 50 years.

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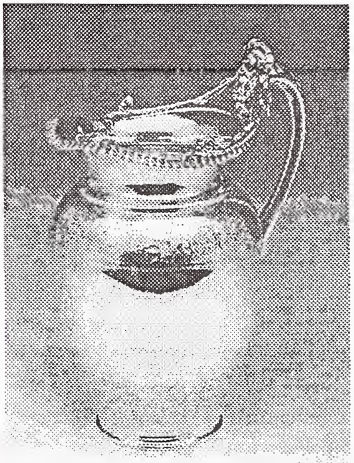
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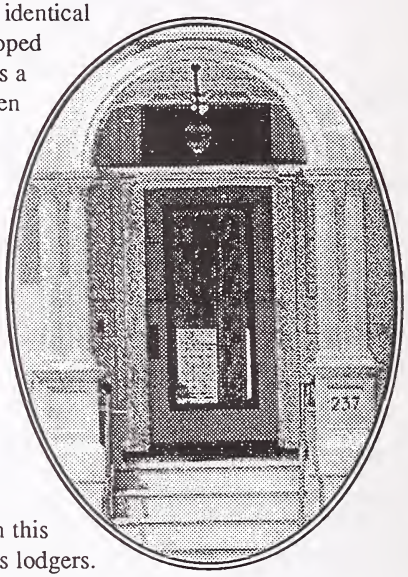
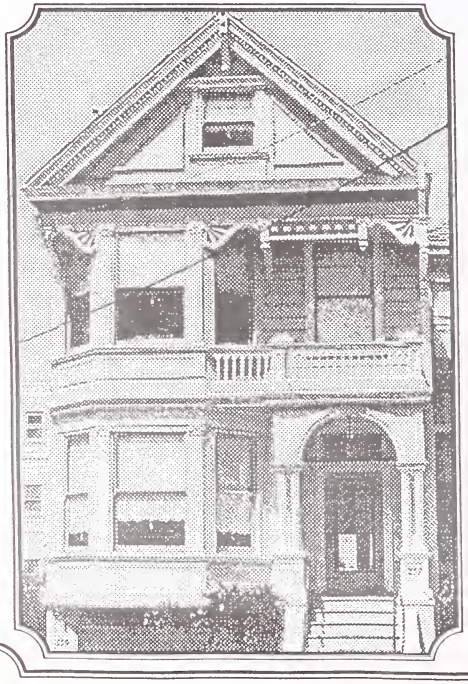
237 COLE STREET

The Eliaser-Milligan House is one of a group of four originally identical houses built on speculation, that is, put up by a developer who hoped to sell them at a profit but had no specific buyers yet. In short, it's a small housing tract. You can see how all four have the same Queen Anne triangular top, the same bay window, the same setback, height and floor plan. They're late Queen Anne and transition into Colonial Revival because of the simpler facades and the spreading out of the typical Victorian verticality.



The developer in this case was Isaac Eliaser, a former watchmaker who owned quite a few lots in this neighborhood. After he gave up watchmaking, his address changed frequently, a clue that he probably would live in an unfinished house he was building, and when he sold it he would move into another. He lived at this address from 1901 to 1903, when he sold it to Robert Milligan, and he then moved next door.

Robert Milligan was an immigrant from Scotland. He lived in this house with his wife Mary, also a Scottish immigrant, and various lodgers. He worked as an accountant for The Examiner and lived in the house until his death in 1941. His widow sold the house in 1947 to a family named Jones. In 1953 it was rented to two couples: Alice and Thomas O'Riordan, a policeman, and Marion and Frank Bond, a warehouse man with a meat-packing firm. The Joneses sold it to the current owner in 1992.



The houses are remarkably similar to the famous "Post Card Row" on Alamo Square, built six years earlier by developer Matthew Kavanaugh. Maybe Eliaser was copying. Notable exterior features include the fans under the cornice, the classical egg-and-dart molding inside the gable end, and the double columns which grace the entry. The interior of the house includes a fine oak and faux-oak paneled staircase in a transitional mix of Queen Anne and Arts-and-Crafts styles. Other features include a bird's-eye maple mantle in the front parlor.

The current owners have been renovating the house themselves. Their restorations include casting the medallions in the parlors from a tract neighbor's medallion and installing a fireplace in the dining room using a mantle piece found in a neighbor's basement.

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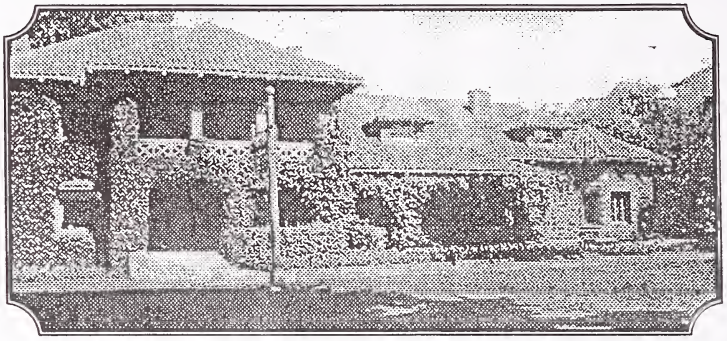
McLaren Lodge

Golden Gate Park Lodge, as McLaren Lodge was originally known, is the last stop on the Victorian Alliance's 1996 tour of the Panhandle Neighborhood. Here you will find refreshments, the Victorian Alliance booth, and other items of interest.



The Lodge has been called the finest extant example of Mission Revival architecture in California, with its rustic stonework, its sense of solidity, its arches, and its overhanging roof. The tile and rock combination also recalls the Stanford University Quad, which owes a debt to the famed eastern architect H.H. Richardson. The right-hand dormer window did not exist originally, but it makes a very good copy. Of course the annex in back is newer still (1950), and we won't speak about its architecture.

McLaren Lodge was built in 1895-96 to designs of Edward Swain, whose career was cut short in 1902. Besides Park Lodge, he is best known for the Whittier Mansion at Jackson and Laguna, but he was also supervising architect for the Ferry Building after the death of its original architect, A. Page Brown. He designed several business buildings which were lost in 1906, a factory on Potrero Hill, and quite a few residences, including the flats at 1638-1642 Fell, which you can see on the way back to the parking lot.

The building replaced an earlier Park Lodge, a two-story wooden house built in 1874 on the Oak Street side of the main drive, The present location was the site of the first nursery for the plantings of Golden Gate Park. The sandstone for this one was quarried in San Francisco at 26th and Douglass by the Gray Brothers, responsible for much of the house-destroying quarrying of Telegraph Hill.

Both of the Lodge buildings were designed to serve as the residence of the park's superintendent. As soon as this one was completed, John McLaren and his family moved in to the two-story part of the building. McLaren, of course, was the legendary superintendent of Golden Gate Park for over half a century. He's the one who hid the statues with bushes, insisted on Park as park not buildings, and generally ruled with an iron hand. He lived in the Lodge until his death in 1943.

The lower part of the building, on the right, originally held offices for the Park Commission, and now administration occupies the whole building. In the conference room you will find a pair of large antique chandeliers donated by the Victorian Alliance about 20 years ago. They came from a church in Birmingham, England, and date to about 1893 -- contemporary with McLaren Lodge.

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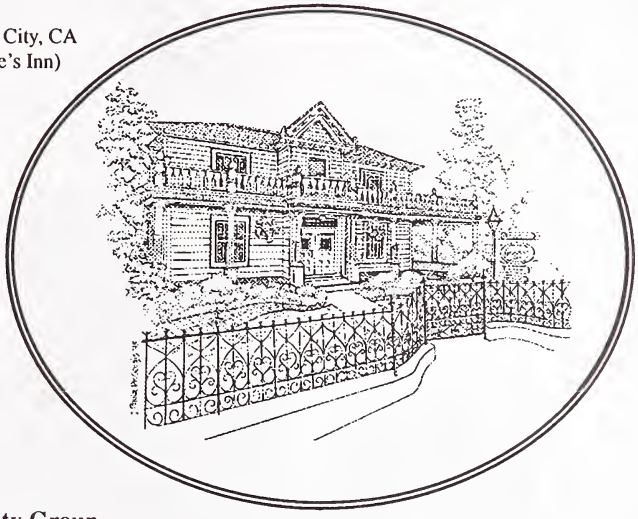

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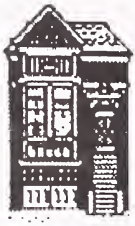

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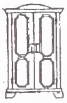

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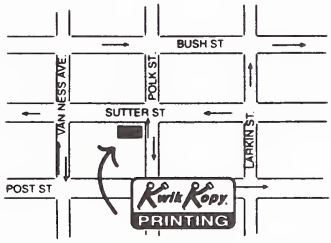

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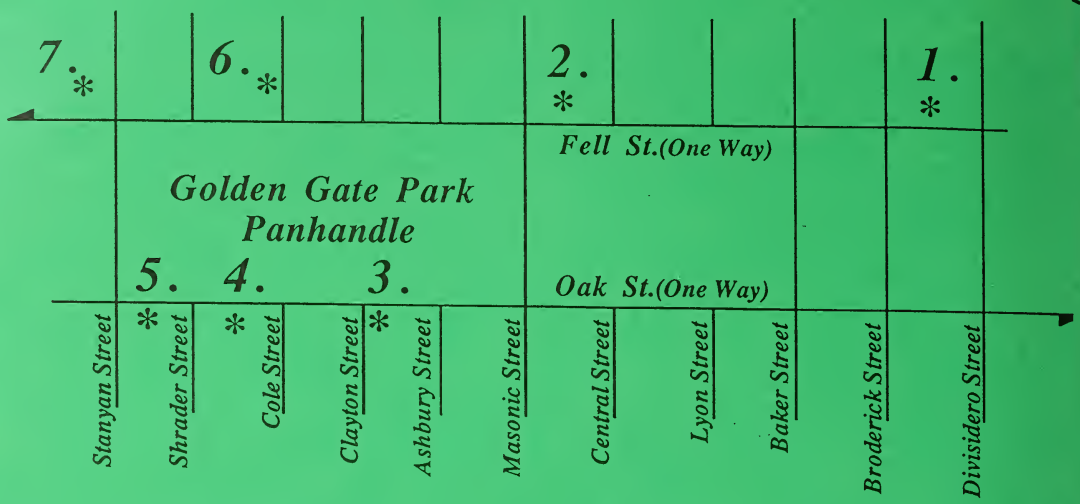

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